

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A pretensioner for increasing the restraint force of a seat belt on an occupant comprising:

a connecting member connected to a piston, the piston being configured to be moved by pressure of gas generated by a gas generator,

a bent tubular member having an approximately constant inner diameter and comprising a linear portion in which the piston is slidably fitted and a gas-generator accommodating portion in which said gas generator is accommodated; and

wherein the connecting member is operatively connected to the seat belt and wherein so that when the piston moves is configured to move entirely within the linear portion and the connecting member pulls the seat belt when the piston moves.

2. (Previously Presented) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the tubular member includes a bend so that an angle between the direction in which the gas-generator accommodating portion extends and the direction in which the linear portion extends is acute.

3. (Previously Presented) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the tubular member includes an obtuse bend so that the gas-generator accommodating portion extends away from the linear portion.

4. (Previously Presented) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the tubular member includes a bend so that the gas-generator accommodating portion extends in a direction generally perpendicular to said linear portion.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The pretensioner of claim 1,~~ A pretensioner for increasing the restraint force of a seat belt on an occupant comprising:

a connecting member connected to a piston, the piston being configured to be moved by pressure of gas generated by a gas generator,

a bent tubular member having an approximately constant inner diameter and comprising a linear portion in which the piston is slidably fitted and a gas-generator accommodating portion in which said gas generator is accommodated; and

wherein the connecting member is operatively connected to the seat belt so that when the piston moves the connecting member pulls the seat belt, and

wherein the gas-generator accommodating portion extends away from and in parallel with said linear portion so as not to be coaxial with said linear portion.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~The pretensioner of claim 1,~~ A pretensioner for increasing the restraint force of a seat belt on an occupant comprising:

a connecting member connected to a piston, the piston being configured to be moved by pressure of gas generated by a gas generator,

a bent tubular member having an approximately constant inner diameter and comprising a linear portion in which the piston is slidably fitted and a gas-generator accommodating portion in which said gas generator is accommodated; and

wherein the connecting member is operatively connected to the seat belt so that when the piston moves the connecting member pulls the seat belt, and

wherein the gas-generator accommodating portion extends in parallel with said linear portion and toward said linear portion.

7. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the tubular member includes a hole bored coaxially with said piston, the connecting member being positioned to pass through the hole.

8. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the connecting member is connected to a seat belt buckle.

9. (Previously Presented) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein movement of the piston within the linear portion is limited to a single direction.

10. (Currently Amended) A pretensioner for increasing the restraining force of a seat belt on an occupant comprising:

a tubular member having an approximately constant inner diameter;

a piston slidably positioned within a linear portion of the tubular member;

wherein the piston is connected to a wire operatively connected to the seat belt and wherein ~~so that when~~ the piston is ~~moves~~ configured to move entirely within the linear portion due to gas pressure generated by a gas generator, so that the seat belt is pulled to thereby increase the restraining force on the occupant;

wherein the gas generator is accommodated within the tubular member; and

wherein the tubular member includes a bend so that the gas generator is located offset from the axis of movement of the piston.

11. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 10, wherein the tubular member includes a hole through which the wire passes, the hole being located between the piston and the gas generator.

12. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 10, wherein movement of the piston is limited to a single direction.

13. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 12, wherein the piston includes a plurality of balls that are forced against an inner surface of the tubular member when the piston is forced in a direction opposite to the single direction.

14. (Original) The pretensioner of claim 13, wherein the piston includes an inclined surface that forces the balls against the inner surface of the tubular member.

15. (Previously Presented) The pretensioner of claim 10, wherein an angle between a line extending parallel to a portion of the tubular member accommodating the gas generator and a line extending along the axis of movement of the piston is acute.

16. (New) The pretensioner of claim 1, wherein the linear portion and the gas-generator accommodating portion of the bent tubular member are integrally formed.